



*Fitzroy Street  
1964.*

*Redeveloped  
as the  
Grafton Centre*

Cambridge KITE AREA Chronicle, by Mike Petty

c.49.66: Kite Area based around Fitzroy Street and Burleigh Street which was redeveloped as The Grafton Centre

#### *Kite commentary*

*It has had a chequered, tortuous history. Sensitive issues like housing shortages, the responsibilities of the welfare state and the pressure for large-scale redevelopment scheme in run-down areas were all there. It was a titanic struggle heralded by the Holford Report in 1950 & closed by opponents finally conceding defeat amid a welter of confusion in May 1981.*

*In the interim there were proposals, counter-proposals, repeated promises of an 'early start', back-peddalling, alternative schemes elsewhere & the emergence of rival developments. There were Government summits, college intervention, inter-council wrangling, critical missives from the Ombudsman & a general smokescreen of doubt. Holford report in 1950 pointed out the inadequacy of the historic centre as a commercial centre.*

*In 1962 the University advocated development of the Burleigh & Fitzroy Street area & by 1965 the City Council had commissioned Lord Llewellyn Davies to prepare a basic scheme. His report was eventually published four years later & caused uproar in all sectors because of the massive scale of building & development which it proposed. As a result the City looked for other developers to suggest alternative schemes.*

*Another decade passed until finally the plan put forward by Grosvenor Estates Commercial Development was accepted & work began in August 1981. Their proposals was more modest in scale - for a 300,000square foot complex with parking pace for 1100 cars & 40 flats - more in keeping with environmental concerns of town ...*

*It developed into an acrimonious political battles. On one side was the apolitical Kite Community Action Group (K.C.A.) fighting to stop the building of a monolithic shopping centre on its doorstep.*

*The Kite had been an enclosed area full of street corner specialist shops that could not afford the rents in the city centre & a bustling community ranging from students seeking cheap accommodation to old age pensioners living in the houses of their birth. They agreed on the need for redevelopment but only on the basis of piecemeal reconstruction within the context of the existing structure.*

*The City Council were now set on the idea of expanding Cambridge's role as a regional commercial centre. It was on these ground that an alliance was struck up in 1977 with Jesus College & property developers Grosvenor Estates.*

*Grosvenor proposed "a scheme of quality & character sensitively integrated with the neighbourhood shopping & residential areas". In 1977 Grosvenor Estate's proposals were accepted. They would pay for nearly all investment costs but would also receive all the profits. The City council was to receive ground rent only*

*For many Kite residents the area then seemed to be deliberately neglected, a hostel for down-and-outs was opened which unsettled the neighbourhood, and combined with decay & empty premises reduced the appeal of the area; parking restrictions hit shoppers formerly attracted by ease of parking, elderly residents were falsely led to believe that their neighbours were selling up; the sewerage system was allowed to break down & rats became widespread*

*1988 The KCA had bought the Little Kettle, once an old style ironmongers. It was occupied by a rota of supporters to prevent demolition. Without warning bulldozers moved in. There was barely time to evacuate the shop. Grosvenor Estates had been set a deadline by the Council to resolve any problems. If it were not met, as seemed likely, plans would be dropped. But a six-month extension was granted. The biggest banana skin of the lot was a slip-up in planning procedures which meant that the city council would not be able to compulsorily purchase land needed for the development until 1983 & as a result Januarys had to acquire more than 100 individual properties by private negotiation. Eventually Grosvenor Developments along with Sun Life Assurance and the city council in a three-way partnership came up with a satisfactory £27M package.*

1900 01 25

The Cambridge Co-operative Society has erected spacious new premises in Burleigh Street. The building is imposing and by contrast with the other not very ornate premises in Burleigh Street is rendered all the more conspicuous. On the ground floor are spaces for the butchery, drapery and boot and shoe department. The first floor is well laid out for other branches with a ready-made clothes emporium and on the top floor is a really fine meeting room. The old building in Fitzroy Street will be retained for the grocery portion of the business.

1900 11 23

Fire broke out at the rear of the premises of Messrs Laurie & McConnal, Fitzroy Street, Cambridge. An employee noticed smoke coming from stacks of brooms, a bag of feathers, a stock of confetti and other material in the cellar. The staff of the firm set to work to extinguish the blaze and by dint of the application of water from a line of buckets and from a hose attached to the water tap, the fire was practically extinguished before the arrival of the fire brigade. It is surmised that a match was dropped down the lift hole by a passer-by, and so caused the outbreak

1903 02 14

Messrs Laurie and McConnal are almost universal providers, for their extensive premises, nos.121-124 Fitzroy Street, contained many departments. Today they are no more. In their place is a great gap, a space which instead of containing the thousand and one articles wherewith to furnish the homes of Cambridge has nothing to show but heaps of charred timber, twisted iron girders and dismembered

masses of masonry. The whole premises have been destroyed as completely as fire can destroy. In less than three hours they licked up goods and buildings valued at up to £100,000 # c.27.2 # c.34.75

1903 02 17

Many thousands of Cambridge people witnessed the spectacle of the fire at Laurie and McConnal's in Fitzroy Street. The crowd increased to gigantic proportions and to keep them in check it was necessary to stretch ropes across on either side. The Mayor, Aldermen and members of the Fire Brigade Committee watched the progress of the fire and the unremitting efforts of the firemen. The interested crowd did not let the firemen work without encouragement and the fireman with the nozzle working in clouds of smoke was cheered heartily when he commenced his task. As soon as the hopelessness of saving Lauries was recognised special attention was turned to defending the adjoining premises of Messrs Sturton and Mumford

1903 02 20

After the great fire in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge, public opinion was strongly expressed in favour of the Volunteer Fire Brigade being in possession of a steam fire engine. It would require, with driver and stoker, eight men to work the engine and, with reliefs of the same number, would necessitate 16 men being engaged. But with only one engine they would have been able to play four jets on either the front or back of the fire, and one side would be entirely unprovided for. The engines and paid brigade would be so expensive that the town authorities would not be justified in incurring the outlay for protecting the few buildings at which they might be necessary.

1903 02 20

The Great Fire. Laurie & McConnal, Ltd., Universal stores, Fitzroy Street, Cambridge, will open their temporary premises in Fair Street with brand new stock of furnishing, general ironmongery, stationery, haberdashery, china and glass. Business usual in the Boot and Tool department, right opposite the destroyed building. – Advert

1903 05 21

Cambridge councillors discussed plans for the erection of new premises for Laurie and McConnal, Fitzroy Street. The bye-laws said there should be a certain amount of air-space behind domestic buildings – house, office or shop - and these had no such space. There was no doubt the plans were in contravention of the bye-laws, the question was whether the Council would refuse them. If they were passed it would be an illegal act. They should not alter the bye-laws to suit the convenience of any class of people

1903 11 21

One of the events of the year was the great fire which swept away the extensive premises of Messrs Laurie & McConnal in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge. Now within nine months the ruins have been replaced by more convenient, commodious and up-to-date premises and the business is in full swing in its new home. They are the first entirely steel-frame buildings erected in this country. Those who remember the former premises cannot but be struck with the immense improvement effected, with lifts, driven by an electric motor, at the service of customers any time of the day.

1907 10 15

A fire occurred at the Fitzroy Street premises of Messrs Sturton. The possibilities of a similar conflagration to that which occurred at Laurie and McConnal's establishment a few years ago seemed probable for close by were a large number of paraffin barrels and tanks containing oil. Capt Greef and 20 firemen were soon on the scene with the horsed fire escape and the steam fire engine was got out in readiness. But their services were not required as P.C. Gee, assisted by several civilians, extinguished the flames. 07 10 15a

**1920**

1929 03 22

Cambridge councillors debated the proposed exchange of Butts Green for New Square in order that it might be converted into a parking place. If I lived in New Square I should not be at all pleased at the idea of that nice little patch of green giving way to a parking place, but if I had a business establishment in Fitzroy Street I should say "Yes, let the cars park there by all means". There is a danger of New Square being built upon in the near future and residents may consider a car park the least of two evils. Others are concerned about using the amenities of Butts Green, though one questioned whether it was used for anything but beating carpets.

## **1930**

1936 01 03

With the enlargement of the drapery section, the Co-operative Society's premises in Burleigh Street comprise the finest Departmental Store in Cambridge. On the ground floor, the Butchery has finest home-killed and imported meat, Grocery sells bread and confectionary, Outfitting has made-to-measure suits while Furnishing has three-piece suites and mirrors. Every Department is equipped in the most modern manner with lifts to all parts of the building. 36 01 03d & e

1936 05 30

Fitzroy Street shop owner blames losses on Corporation slum clearance and multiple shops 36 05 30

1950 01 30

Holford Report published; suggests historic centre unable meet shopping needs of future, "We regard Fitzroy Street as ... a valuable relief for shopping pressure on the older centre"

1952 11 12

Ninety-one percent of the properties in the East Road area of Cambridge fell into the "short life" or "no life" categories the Development Plan inquiry was told. The area as a whole was described as "densely packed". The age of the houses was about 100 years, they were generally poorly constructed and the worst property in Cambridge lay in the area. The plan envisages using Norfolk Street as a local shopping centre to keep East Road free for a traffic route. But Mr S.P. Yarrow, retail grocer at 35 East Road said that if he went to Norfolk Street his turnover would be cut by half. B.G. Reynolds of Renbro Wireless Services, East Road, said he had one of the best positions in the area and business would go down if he moved. They did not see why two shops in East Road should impede the flow of traffic. 52 11 12

1954 07 07

The old-established department store of Laurie and McConnal of Fitzroy Street, Cambridge has been purchased by the London firm of Shirley Bros, but they say the public will not notice the changes. The store was opened by Mr James Laurie and in recognition of advice given by his friend Mr McConnal he decided to use both names as a trading title, though only members of the Laurie family actually held shares. It prospered as an ironmonger's shop but following a major fire in 1903 was rebuilt as one of the biggest departmental stores in East Anglia, increasing its scope to include almost everything for the home and garden.

1954 12 01

Cambridge councillors suggest that 20 cottages fronting to East Road, 18 of which are empty, should be developed as soon as possible by the erection of flats. Under the new Development Plan East Road would become a trunk road and with the construction of the Chesterton Bridge the amount of traffic would greatly increase. This would cause a considerable widening and the possible construction of dual carriageways which would leave very little of the site of the cottages available for development.

1955 02 18

A scheme for the re-development of the Fitzroy Street area as the main commercial centre of Cambridge has been submitted by a London Architect. It is a counter-proposition to the official Development Plan which could only result in the eventual complete destruction of the essential character of the city. The greater part of the area consists of out-dated two-storey cottages with extensive yards and is largely a slum. Re-development is due and can be done without the restrictions of historical associations and high land values. There would be a series of attractive courtyards unencumbered with traffic, one of which is large enough to take the place of the present Market Hill. An essential feature of the scheme is a new thoroughfare to link Gonville Place with Victoria Avenue and complete the inner Ring Road. 55 02 18a

1956 02 10

East Road demolition – 56 02 10a & b

1956 03 24

Kite area: Jesus College plan expected soon [2.3]

1956 04 19

An enquiry heard that Cambridge city council had wanted to purchase land at the junction of Fitzroy Street and Wellington Street, pull down the old houses and use the land to re-site industry displaced from the East Road area. They offered to pay the current price but the owner, a former chairman of the Council's Finance Committee, said that if the land had potential for light industry then the price should be higher. Eventually negotiations broke down. Now he applied to redevelop the area, but the council opposed his plans. 56 04 19a &

1956 06 29

Cambridge has 1,350 dwellings unfit for human habitation including 100 in the East Road, Gothic and Doric Street areas. The Council is to submit proposals for the demolition of 500 dwellings in the next five years and the remainder within the following seven. But three condemned cottages at Brookside in Toft have been reinstated by the Cottage Improvement Society and now make a charming group in this beautiful yet little known corner of the village. 55 06 29

1956 07 23

Councillors received a report on the redevelopment of the East Road comprehensive development area. The first stage provides for 51 dwellings – maisonettes, flats and houses – to house 206 people, as well as six shops and seven garages. Two more stages will see 212 dwellings, housing 737 people. There will be a district heating scheme from a central boiler house for the supply of hot water throughout the estate. 56 07 23a

1957 09 05

Plans to use five two-storey dwellings in East Road for storage and business purposes were turned down. The buildings were occupied and producing an annual income of £60 but the Council wanted to serve demolition orders to get the site for road improvements without fair compensation. The Minister said that East Road was narrow and attracted heavy traffic. It was to be widened but such use would add seriously to the present congestion. 57 09 05

1958 01 22

Fitzroy/Burleigh Street is easily the most convenient shopping area in the city, handy to the bus station and enjoys ample parking facilities. There is one car park at New Square and another in Burleigh Street. It offers the widest variety imaginable with two department stores and 39 specialist shops. You can get everything from fish cakes to furniture. Two good reasons why you should do your shopping there – Advertisement by the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street Traders Association. 58 01 22

1958 09 25

An inquiry into plans for the compulsory purchase and clearance orders affecting 67 houses in East Road, Fitzroy Street, Adam and Eve Street and Gloucester Terrace heard from three objectors. Mr

J.N. Baldry had plans to develop his site in connection with his mineral water business. But the Medical Officer said the area contained some of the worst houses in Cambridge: they were all unfit and clearance would serve the interests of public health. 58 09 25

1959 04 29

The City Council is to consider the largest project ever undertaken in Cambridge. The giant Lion Yard scheme includes a two-decker underground car park taking 731 vehicles, a unique 'pedestrian shopping precinct', a new central library, residential hotel and a petrol filling station. Jesus College have also submitted a scheme for the redevelopment of the north side of Fitzroy Street. Many think that increases in shopping facilities ought to take place as an extension of this well-established area. 59 04 29a-d & 59 04 29e

1959 07 24

Councillors withdrew their attention from the Lion Yard area to a part of the city which some have always considered of equal importance – Fitzroy Street. This should be comprehensively redeveloped to provide residential, shopping and business facilities with a new bus station. The Lion Yard should be developed with a library, civic restaurant and small car park, leaving the frontages as they are, some argued. 59 07 24b & c

1959 08 26

Sir – in the area between Warkworth Street and Burleigh Street there are many little houses which have been bought by elderly people for their retirement and by young couples starting a new home. Now having been put in good order they are to be demolished by the Council in a 'development scheme'. It is cruel, unnecessary, and wasteful to pull down houses which are in liveable condition because in the same neighbourhood there are a number that are neglected and damp. I hope ratepayers will protest – Hilda Finney, Prospect Row. 59 08 26

1959 09 30

The area between East Road, Norfolk Street and St Matthew's Street comprises narrow streets and courts of dwellings of the demolition standard, creating a general impression of decay. The whole area should be demolished and rebuilt, the Surveyor told an Inquiry. Every house in Staffordshire Street was damp, some roofs are sunken and some water closets are across the street from the houses they serve. But many owners objected to plans for compulsory purchase. 59 09 30c & d [4.5]

1959 11 04

In the past few years the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street area, with its easy access, ample car-parking facilities and huge variety of shops, has become increasingly popular as Cambridge's most convenient shopping centre. Many of the shops were formerly in ramshackle buildings, combining timber and corrugated iron with a minimum of brickwork, often built over the front gardens of houses which had their ground floors converted. But now these have made way for up-to-the-minute shopping premises and improvements are constantly going on. 59 11 04 & a

1959 11 17

Co-op new self-service super food store, Burleigh St - 59 11 17

**1960**

***The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date***

1960 03 12

The Minister has confirmed compulsory purchase orders concerning houses in Norfolk Street which the City Council are anxious to pull down for the second stage of the East Road redevelopment scheme. The area affected was generally dilapidated, over-crowded and of a demolition standard with

some of the buildings giving a general impression of decay. Now they can go ahead with erecting new houses, flats and shops 60 03 12

1960 03 25

Three new major building projects are all progressing satisfactorily. The first storey of at least one building on the Churchill College site is already visible from Madingley Road. The cast iron arches of the old Garret Hostel Lane Bridge have been removed with a temporary wooden structure erected over the river. In East Road the scheme for redeveloping a large area previously occupied with derelict buildings is rapidly taking shape. Maisonettes will be constructed in the first stage followed by shops, flats, roads and houses. 60 03 25d

1961 01 11

Cambridge University published proposals to enhance the city's character as a university town. Historic buildings would be retained and where redevelopment is essential the new buildings would be on a scale and character compatible with the central area. The Lion Yard development could include a civic hall which is needed both by city and university together with a library and small art gallery. If the City Council cannot pay for it then the University and some of the colleges should join in a developing consortium to provide the necessary finance to carry out the development and benefit from the profits. The only area of Cambridge suitable for a regional shopping centre is that around City Road and Fitzroy Street. It has space for shops, restaurants, car parks and houses and could be well-served by public transport. By contrast the city centre does not meet the land requirement unless there is such demolition that it would affect the character of the area. The roads are poor and provision of adequate car parking would be an impossible task. 61 01 11c 61 01 11b

1961 08 24

Motorists are quick to seize every chance that comes their way of finding a parking space for their cars. Already several have made the most of the opportunity provided by the demolition work in Adam and Eve Street. Vehicles now stand where a row of cottages used to exist. The buildings were cleared as part of the City Council's redevelopment scheme in the East Road district 61 08 24a

1962 04 21

Kite area: endorsed as shopping area by city - develop shopping facilities & relieve pressure centre [2.10, 4.11]

1962 05 03

An inquiry into the Bradmore Street area heard that 119 houses between Petersfield, East Road, Broad Street and the CCAT were unfit for human habitation and should be demolished under the slum clearance plan. The area would be used for extensions to the college and the Mill Road Sorting Office. But six householders objected. One lady had lived in her home for 50 years, she was 89 and blind and would find it difficult to move. Another had been deaf and dumb from birth; she had lived there for 54 years and was frightened at the prospect of being relocated. 62 05 03a

1962 05 09

Cambridgeshire Planning Department has described the University's scheme to create a new regional shopping centre in the Fitzroy Street area as 'basically an impractical proposal'. Their idea is incompatible with the County Development Plan principle of restricting industrial and population growth. The extra traffic would mean roads would have to be improved to urban motorway standard and rehousing the existing residential population would impose a severe strain on the building industry 62 05 09a

1962 06 01

University plans for city – 62 06 01c

1962 06 16

City Road residents form Association to fight University plans [4.12]

1962 06 25

Inquiry highlights three divisions of opinion. University plans for the future of Cambridge envisage that in the Lion Yard there would be a new hall for conferences, concerts and all kinds of music with a new library, small shops, cafes and homes for 300 people. A new regional shopping centre in City Road would be free of all vehicular traffic and there could be more homes on the site than before. The housing areas which are close to the centre are also the oldest and many are in need of redevelopment. Already 4,000 people have had to leave since 1950 but the University wants to see at least as many living in these areas as were there ten years go. County accept library but reject concert hall. City want commercial development in new pedestrian shopping centre 62 06 25 [2.11, 2.12]

1962 07 19

The University's plans for Cambridge envisage a new shopping area off Fitzroy Street providing sites for large retailing units, segregated pedestrians and vehicular traffic areas and car parking close enough for shoppers to walk. All future schemes for redevelopment of University sites should have adequate car parking; this is the University's view and they will bear their share of the car parking burden, the Estate Manager told an Inquiry. 62 07 19

1962 10 20

Burleigh street property bought by London property firm – 62 10 20c

1963

*City planner, Logie, proposes underground road to link the main centre with a 'joint centre & in Burleigh St area 81 06 01*

1963 09 04

East Road, once a narrow, cluttered thoroughfare, is gradually being improved; photo of new works adjacent to the widened East Road carriageway 63 09 04c

1963 10 02

Part of the East Road dual carriageway is now open. 63 10 02

1964 07 06

Cambridge expansion: Conservatives would like to encourage businesses which start in the town and want the Market Square to be the main centre. Socialists want new light industries with the Lion Yard as a civic centre and with new shopping in Burleigh Street while the Liberals favour a central pedestrian precinct with public transport in the form of a minibus service or travloator. 64 07 06a

1964 08 28

The Lion Yard area is badly laid out and contains 'obsolete development'; there should be a small increase in shopping space with the rest devoted to civic and university uses, Sir Keith Joseph, the Minister of Housing says. A brand new shopping area should be created in the City Road area – the present twilight zone. It will take traffic away from the centre, cater for modern supermarket trends and fit in with plans for the continuation of the East Road housing scheme 64 08 28, 28b [4.15]

1964 08 28

Traders are split over proposals for a new shopping centre off Fitzroy Street. Claude Scott, motor agents, say trade would be increased but he would seek full compensation to leave. T. Tarrants tobacconists, say it would be good but family businessman A.P. Cook of Prospect Row, who has run a grocery store for 50 years, says he will fight hard against compulsory purchase. Mrs J.A. Douglas of Earl Street, who has just modernised her house, is horrified at the proposals. 64 08 28c

1964 09 29

Kite: vast rehousing, unenviable task [8.10]



1964 08 31

Nearly 1,000 houses and 60 businesses will be effected in creating a new regional shopping centre off Fitzroy Street. 64 08 31

1964 09 30

Fitzroy Street shopping development to be linked to centre by free bus – feature – 64 09 30b

1964 11 19

University offer money to engage planning team so submit plans for Lion Yard and new shopping area in City Road as urgent action needed – 64 11 19, 19d

1964 08 29

Kite vast rehousing people from City Road area an unenviable task- nearly 1000 houses & 65 acres in twilight zone [8.10]

1965 01 30

Llewellyn-Davies invited to prepare plan for new shopping Centre, Fitzroy Street, will be financed by University £20,000 – 65 01 30a [5.1]

1965 03 11

Ward's move to new premises in Burleigh Street marks another stage in the long history of a firm which started when Jonas Ward made a living mending bicycles in East Road. For some time they made the famous Crown cycles, one of which was ridden from Cambridge to Monte Carlo in 1930. They also supplied carrier cycles and box tricycles. Later they diversified into wireless, gramophones, washing machines and baby carriages and became one of the first to stock televisions in 1938. – 65 03 11a, b

1965 07 30

Laurie & McConnal modernising the whole of their shop frontage in Fitzroy Street; new display windows will replace the arcade-type ones there since 19th century; “faith in City Road as new shopping centre – 65 07 30a

1966

*Debate about inner relief road would mean dual carriageway between two shopping centres; Logie unveils six possible schemes for Kite area, are scrapped a few months later amid accusations that 20 years have been wasted 81 06 01*

1966 01 21

New Square Residents Association issue 'The Second Centre' report opposing Inner Relief Road; seeks bus station Gold Street, one-way streets, commercial development – 66 01 21c

1966 08 03

Fitzroy Street sub-post office moved to Co-op in Burleigh Street, petition in protest – 66 08 23a

1966 08 09

“Shopping Growth” plan includes Christ's Pieces with underground car park, Kite favoured [5.5]

1966 09 16

Gordon Logie plans for Kite Area shows how may develop in 20 years' time – 66 09 16a

1966 10 07

Burleigh/Fitzroy Street favoured for shopping redevelopment in preference to Lion Yard – 66 10 07

1966 11 23

If Fitzroy Street area developed as shopping centre CCAT students will have nowhere to park their cars – 66 11 23

1966 12 09

Plan to create regional shopping centre in Fitzroy Street and develop Lion Yard primarily as civic centre approved by City Council – 66 12 09a

1967

*New Logie plans involving parking for 2,000 cars, arcades, supermarkets & cycle paths, nothing happens 81 06 01*

1967 03 03

'Heart of Cambridge' planning report envisages shopping centre surrounded by traffic-free area – 67 03 03a

1967 05 31

Fitzroy Street 'Corner Shop' demolition – photo – 67 05 31

1967 07 05

Fitzroy Street neglected area – photo – 67 07 05c

1968

*Cambridge businessman offers pay for summit meeting between city & county planners & Government to speed redevelopment, nothing happens 81 06 01*

1968 08 01

Kite area planning report from London consultants- 68 08 01a

1968 03 26

Fitzroy Street – Burleigh Street residents fear city council intend to demolish good houses under slum-clearance scheme – 68 03 26

1969

*Llewelyn-Davies report proposing three car parks, bus station & 450,000 sq feet of shopping & office space 81 06 01*

1969 02 21

Fitzroy Street redevelopment – architect's impression – 69 02 21, 21a # c.49.66 # c.49.4

1969 06 06

Sainsbury's want two self-service shops to replace their antiquated premises in Sidney Street, one in Trinity Street, the other in the Kite – 69 06 06, 06a

1970

*County accept plan until reminded must be public inquiry into objections about link road; Samuel Properties & Jesus college commission own report from Piano & Rogers; county planners want more proposals by mid 1971 81 06 01*

1970 06 17

Kite area plan 'torn up behind locked doors' – city reject consultants' recommendation, to form consortium with Jesus College and a property company, inquiry told – 70 06 17

1970 12 29

Fitzroy-Burleigh redevelopment may start as Samuel Properties start discussions – 70 12 29

1971 04 28

Fitzroy Street shopping report published – feature – 71 04 28

1971 06 28

Fitzroy Street, Burleigh Street shopping – photos – 71 06 28 & a

1971 12 06

Kite – a sad saga of city-county clashes – feature – started become neglected WWI, acceleration last 15 years ... monument to planners, blighted & fossilised; some say slow destruction deliberate but unlikely Cambridge capable of such a calculated campaign, more likely derelict by default, “walls crumble, more slates slide, panes smashed” 1972 [8.11, 8.12]

1971 12 07

Mackay plans to extend engineering factory and build more shops and offices on East Road blocked – 71 12 07a

1972

*City planners agree to 600,000 sq ft of shopping space because of interest shown by big chain store*  
81 06 01

1972 03 20

Most of the people who will be displaced by the Burleigh Street-Fitzroy Street redevelopment (Cambridge) want to be rehoused in the same area according to a report. Counc. Christopher Bradford claimed that the land was bought by the city council for "chickenfeed" ten years ago and is now worth £65,000. The council paid only £200 to £300 development value for some of the houses and perhaps £2,000 for some of the others 72 03 20

1972 04 19

Large stores in Kite, p16

1972 06 09

The family firm of D. Mackay, Britannia Works, East Road, Cambridge, celebrate their 60th year jubilee this week. The Britannia Public house from which the works took its name has recently been demolished, and the houses which formed Britannia Place have long since disappeared, as has the Smith which stood in the public house yard. Many other landmarks have been swept away in the new Roadworks. It used to be said that by standing at the corner of East Road and Newmarket Road one would be sure to meet one's friends. Now it is difficult to see which is the corner, and the traffic roars past too fast for leisurely greetings

1972 06 16

Walls crumble, more slates slide, panes smashed ... [8.13]

1972 07 26

A total of 160 houses in the Burleigh street – Fitzroy street area of Cambridge will have to be demolished to make way for the city council's shopping redevelopment scheme. At present only 34 of the houses are unoccupied. The city council are prepared to buy the houses at full market value if the owners cannot find other buyers. Some of the houses have already been classed as slums and earmarked for demolition. A number have in fact already been closed, such as in parts of James Street or demolished, as at Adam and Eve Street. A year ago the city council gave details of a large area outside the Burleigh Street - Fitzroy Street complex which they said would not be required for demolition. This gave the house owners the go-ahead to apply for grants of up to £1,000 to improve their homes

1972 07 31

Delay on Kite, p12

1972 11 21

The Cambridge city council's planning consultants who are designing the redevelopment plans for the Burleigh Street- Fitzroy Street have suggested the building of a departmental store East of Napier Street. Consultants feel that the introduction of shopping uses at this point would improve the whole project in addition to saving housing land to the North of Maids Causeway and James Street. They have also proposed that the pedestrian way along Fitzroy Street should be graded down and Napier Street itself raised over the pedestrian way. This appears to be the best way of separating traffic and pedestrians 72 11 21

1972 11 30

Traders fed up with Kite delays, p13

1972 12 07

A large out-of-town shopping complex covering about 10 acres is being planned for Newmarket Road, just outside the Cambridge boundary. But Cambridge planning committee decided to resist the project. Fears were expressed about the effect the shopping centre would have for the city council's plans for redeveloping the Burleigh Street - Fitzroy street area. Marshalls of Cambridge (Engineering) made an application to develop the shopping complex, together with car parking and garages on a site immediately to the East of their vehicular workshops off Newmarket Road. The site faces Cambridge airport

1973

Kite : delay considering till Parry Lewis report, 13 day inquiry [5.19, 8.12]

1973

Kite : Parry Lewis double-crossed by Kite decision (he opposed) [6.9]

1973

“Parry Lewis says that Kite development will sign death knell for Market Square area, new focus of commercial development must be on edge of city & this cannot be done if Kite goes ahead ... his words have too uncomfortable a ring of truth about them ... in the past we have pressed for action on this plan; our ‘City in shackles’ series tried to express the frustration which many citizens felt at the stagnation of the planning process ... but now we, who have formerly pressed for action are now urging caution” [12]

1973 01 06

Kite scheme might begin, p7

1973 02 02

Householders, traders, planners and property developers have a common hope in the outcome of next week's public inquiry into the proposed comprehensive development plan for the Burleigh Street area of Cambridge. They all want a firm answer to a question which has blighted a decade of Cambridge planning history. The answer, if it comes, will not please everybody, since homes and small businesses are threatened by the scheme, but it should put an end to years of confusion and uncertainty. The question is: Will the Government give the go-ahead for redevelopment on the lines of the current proposals?

1973 02 16

Mr Jeremy Thorpe, the Liberal leader, visited residents in the Burleigh-Fitzroy Street area of Cambridge, whose homes are endangered by the proposed shopping development which is at present the subject of an inquiry. Amongst the people he met was Mrs Lavinia Hawes, who moved to her James Street home six months ago and said that it suited her family perfectly. She would be giving evidence at the inquiry. After a visit to the new Cambridge volunteer bureau in Fitzroy Street, Mr Thorpe left to see Bar Hill

1973 04 26

The scheme to build a hypermarket for Tesco on the outskirts of Cambridge has been rejected by the city council. The scheme was put forward on behalf of Tesco by Stokes of Cambridge Ltd. They asked permission to build a 100,000 square foot hypermarket with a car park for 900 cars on land off Milton Road next to the railway line. The store would have been one of the largest in Cambridge. In turning it down the planning committee said it was outside the area allocated for development, would encourage extra traffic on a fast trunk route and was against the shopping policy for Cambridge in which large scale development is aimed at the Fitzroy Street - Burleigh Street area

1973 06 06

Kite pay park, p5

1973 08 31

The £20m redevelopment scheme for the Fitzroy Street - Burleigh Street area of Cambridge may go ahead with only minor modifications, following the result of a 13-day public inquiry earlier this year. Several schemes for the area have been considered and rejected over the past 10 years, but the present plans, designed by international architects Piano & Rogers were adopted by the city and county councils last year

1973 09 10

Prof John Parry Lewis, the Manchester don who has just finished the biggest Cambridge re-development plan ever devised, has told the Government that it may as well be scrapped now if the new Fitzroy-Burleigh Street shopping centre goes ahead. When his final report is published it will contain some sweeping proposals. One of these is for a new commercial centre on the Cambridge outskirts - perhaps in the Trumpington area - in order to siphon shops and traffic away from the historic heart of the city

1973 09 21

Like some great suicidal spider Cambridge will have eaten its heart out by the turn of the century. Such is the dramatic prophecy of Professor John Parry Lewis who has been making a complete study of its future. Specifically he is saying is that if Cambridge proceeds with the scheme to build a twin shopping centre in the Fitzroy Street - Burleigh street area it will be signing the death knell of the present Market Square area. He concludes that a new focus for commercial activity must be developed on the edge of the city either in the Trumpington area or to the east near Marshall's airport. This cannot be done if the Fitzroy-Burleigh scheme proceeds, as the indications now are that it will

1974

*Jesus-Samuel properties plan approved in outline but council talk about scrapping whole scheme 81 06 01*

1974 06 27

A warning that within 10 years the Lion Yard areas of Cambridge, now being completely redeveloped will become a "twilight zone" is given in a new booklet, "Walks round vanished Cambridge", published by Land of Cokaygne. It says: "Within 10 years the town centre will have moved east to the Kite area, the University west to the science city. Lion Yard will be a twilight zone lost somewhere between the two".

1974 07 31

'Save Kite Campaign' starts with cleaning; Kite Action Committee set up eight months ago [8.13]

1974 10 29

The Parry Lewis super plan for the future of Cambridge, which took three years to prepare at a cost of £20,000, has been rejected by all the senior city and county planning officers. The plans main suggestions were for the immediate scrapping of the scheme for extensive development in the

Burleigh Street – Fitzroy street area and the building of a second shopping centre in the Trumpington area. Chairman of the County Planning committee, Counc. Tony Cornell, said: “The technical boys took a look at Parry Lewis and they have not liked what they have seen”

1974 11 06

New plans for reshaping Cambridge’s Burleigh St – Fitzroy St shopping area are being unveiled at a private meeting tonight. Although the project provides for more than 80 shops, including two major departmental stores, it is on a smaller commercial scale than the plans put forward three years ago. The project includes a new underground country bus station; placing much of Napier street underground to avoid disruption to people living nearby, a series of underground service roads to allow pedestrians traffic free access to the main shopping area, and the creation of landscaped parks. It provides for a new store for the John Lewis organisation and another for Laurie & McConnell

1974 11 08

By Cambridge planning standards, the argument over how the Burleigh St – Fitzroy St area should be redeveloped is a relative newcomer to a list of current city controversies. It has been raging for only 15 years. Which means that at least another 10 years of inactivity are necessary before the Lion Yard redevelopment record is reached. Cambridge city council has announced its intention of making a decision on the future of the area by the end of the year. But even if this happens it will not be the end of the story by a long way. There will be inevitable objections and the problem of raising money must remain a formidable obstacle in these economic times.

1974 12 31

The controversial multi-million pound redevelopment proposals for Cambridge’s Burleigh Street – Fitzroy street area may be scrapped and traders and residents encouraged to rebuild as they wish. This is just what the majority of them have been advocating for most of the 15 years over which the controversy surrounding plans for the revitalisation of the area has raged. Leading members of the City council’s controlling Labour Group are now trying to whip up general support behind the scenes for the new thinking. Moves come on the eve of the Government’s expected announcement that after a two-year delay official approval is on the way to the area to be declared as suitable for comprehensive redevelopment

1975

*Council accepts Piano & Rogers scheme & starts working out detailed plans with consortium 81 06 01*

1975 02 07

The Government has decided after two years deliberation that the Burleigh Street – Fitzroy street area of Cambridge is suitable for redevelopment. This now lays the responsibility for action squarely on the city council who are likely to decide within two months whether to drop the much-criticised official development plan and go ahead with something less contentious. The plan has been unanimously rejected by the area’s residents and shopkeepers 75 02 07

1975 02 20

Cambridge University should be nationalised, the Kite area turned over to council housing and traffic banned inside the city boundaries, the Cambridge Communist Party says in a policy statement. Amongst other measures they would like to see are turning the church of St Andrew the Great into a civic restaurant, requisition of vacant accommodation if vacant for six months, industrial expansion of Cambridge with more council houses, and the banning of office expansion in favour of housing and jobs.

1975 04 08

Kite: Ian Nairn calls for rehabilitation area [7.1]

1975 04 18

The Labour-controlled Cambridge city council has decided by a two-to-one majority to develop the Burleigh-Fitzroy area mainly as a regional shopping centre in partnership with Jesus College and a London property company. This is the first definite and much substantial move the city council has taken about the future of the so-called "Kite" area in the 15 years of controversy and discussion that has surrounded it 75 04 18

1975 04 21

Kite properties released from blight after 15 years [7.2]

1975 06 23

Shoppers in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge, were astonished to hear the strains of a brass band drifting down to them apparently right out of the sky. But the band was real enough. Perched in the little bandstand on the top of Laurie & McConnal's store the player jogged memories back 40 years or more to the time when such entertainment was a regular event for Saturday shoppers. The revival was the idea of Kite Community Action. Eight members of a local jazz group agreed to revive the past and play again. Whether the Saturday morning continues is up to the players. The store would be very happy to have them play anytime

1975 09 02

Kite redevelopment, p3

1975 11 28

Cambridge City Council has brought the Rumble-Tum Restaurant at Burleigh Street and two private houses at Fitzroy Street. All are in the centre of the area, known as the Kite, which the council proposes to redevelop comprehensively in the near future. The individual purchase prices are not being disclosed. The Burleigh Street and Fitzroy Street properties will show an estimate future profit for the council of £1.137 a year from rents.

1976

*Money problems: scheme will require £13m investment from city for return of £150,000 pa, look for help 81 06 01*

1976 01 19

The Free Press public house, Prospect Row, Cambridge, is being sold back to Greene King by the City Council. The tiny Kite-area pub, council-owned since the 1960s when it was bought as part of a slum clearance area was due to be demolished to make way for a road. That scheme was dropped in 1969 and now they are negotiating its sale back to the brewery, which continued to lease the pub after the council bought it.

1976 01 21

The Cambridge pressure group Kite Community Action are making a half-hour television film to be screened as part of the Open Door series and will put the case against the proposed re-development of the Kite as a regional shopping centre. They are trying to show something about the people who live there. The film will show the kind of neighbourhood which is likely to be sacrificed in the interests of motorised shopping.

1976 02 21

Kite tv film, p5

1976 03 11

A new store, the Talk of the Town, is to open in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge in the building formerly occupied by Peaks Furnishers. The store is divided into individual sections, some let to local traders & some rented to national companies. An Elizabethan Tea Room complete with period furniture and fittings and a wedding dress section are on the top floor. The store has special design features such as

log cabins for changing rooms in the fashion section and thatched roofing for the farm produce section

1976 03 19

Kite Action report [7.3]

1976 04 02

Kite report, p10

1976 04 12

Jesus College opened its Eden Street housing development to the public to show just what can be done with old properties in Cambridge's Kite area. The college plans the conversion of more than 30 two and three-bedroomed homes at rentals from £8 to £10 a week. Two major types of conversion are in hand, one of extending existing terraced houses to give two-bedroomed homes, and the other of combining two terraced houses to make one new one

1976 04 17

The future redevelopment of the Burleigh Street - Fitzroy Street area of Cambridge is back in the melting pot following the decision of the outgoing city council to throw out the massive £30 million scheme proposed by a London development company for the Kite area. The rejection of the scheme, which would have brought a greatly-increased number of shops in to the area, together with car parks, a new road and an underground country bus station, was an easy matter for the city council. But it was far less easy for them to decide how to go about working out alternatives.

1976 05 18

Kite scheme, p1

1976 05 21

Plans for radical alterations to two listed cottages in the "Kite area" of Cambridge, the subject of a long and bitter row between a city man and council officials, would cost £59,000, it was stated at a planning inquiry. The scheme involves dismantling and rebuilding an 1825 façade and excavating a basement in Orchard Street. A council witness said the plan to build a facsimile of the façade would destroy the weathered texture and unity of the terrace.

1976 06 01

The Kite is a thriving shopping and business centre with all the charm of a village within Cambridge, where the scale is human, where homes and businesses blend and where shopkeepers and shoppers know each other. It wears its quirks and curiosities proudly; where else could you browse through art nouveau curios (James Street), munch a crispy delicious waffle dripping maple syrup (Waffles) or buy a bargain pine dresser (City Road). There's a Kite community fighting every inch of the way to preserve the homes, the shops and the personality of this game little patch of Victorian Cambridge which is now more full of life than ever.

1976 08 02

An experimental free bus service for the Fitzroy Street area of Cambridge commenced at the weekend, providing the public with the first buses in the area for almost three years. 67 people made use of the first bus run at 10am on Saturday. The owner of the Talk of the Town shopping arcade, Mr Carl Owen, has hired one bus from the Eastern Counties Bus Company at a cost of £30 per day. He said he will hire more for a four-week period to prove the company were wrong to stop the service.

1976 09 01

Kite corner shop, p13

1976 11 05

Kite plan, p9



1977

*Cheviot House & Amalgamated Developers put forward schemes; Cheviot House £10M for four large shops, 60 small shop units, parking for 1,250 cars, £91,000 pa profit for council after five years, Powley "as near perfect as it is possible to make it" 81 06 01*

1977 02 17

What kind of shopping facilities will we see in Cambridge in the future? If recent events are pointers then the small operator will be replaced – just as quaint non-conformist Petty Cury was replaced with the corporate dullness of Lion Yard. The rents jumped enormously leaving the high mark-up multitudes – Golden Egg, Dixons, Van Allen, Etam, Chelsea Girl et al to take the units paying between £3,000 and £18,000 a year in rent. It meant that the variety of shops was reduced. If the Kite complex proposals were to see the light of day then an identical effect could occur.

1977 03 22

Cambridge & District Co-operative Society's plan to expand the Beehive complex, which was turned down by the county planners, has been given the go-ahead by the Department of the Environment. The scheme, using the former Cadbury-Schwepes warehouse near Coldham's Lane will provide an extended shopping space, a garden centre and leisure goods sales centre. The Inspector said that as there were still no definite plans for the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street redevelopment the Beehive scheme would meet some of the shopping need without detriment to the city centre.

1977 04 02

Kite plans, p1

1977 04 20

A multi-million pound deal for the rebuilding of large parts of the Burleigh Street – Fitzroy Street area of Cambridge (The Kite) which would involve a handsome handout to the ratepayers is being negotiated between the City council and two internationally known development companies. Under the deal the redevelopment could be carried out without any cost to the ratepayers. The council would hand some of its land holdings – much now derelict – to the developers on a long lease. In return they would build large car parks for the council, regrass the New Square car park and erect a number of shops, at least one of them a department store. And at the end of the development period the company would make either a substantial lump sum payment to the council or give it a large cut of the rents collected. 77 04 20

1977 07 05

Cambridge City council announced details of its £10 million redevelopment scheme for the Kite area – and at once fell foul of the man who claims he can stop it all from happening, 76-year-old Mr Arthur Sutton. For nearly all his life he has lived at 1 Christchurch Street – one of the few houses which the council needs to demolish to make way for its new shopping and car park complex. But Mr Sutton declared: "Nobody is going to move me from the house I have occupied for 63 years. I am there and I am going to stay put". The new proposals are the latest in a string of plans produced during the past 20 years, all of which have been dropped.

1977 07 27

The issue of redevelopment in the Kite area of Cambridge may have dragged on for more years than many care to remember but the controversy it has provoked is far from disappearing. More than 300 people turned up to the Guildhall. Opinions on the scheme varied. A pork butcher, Mr Jack Curtis, who had traded in Burleigh Street since 1945 said he had never seen a scheme that hurt so few people. There were interruptions, including an appropriately timed blast or two from a bugle smuggled in by Mr Arthur Sutton whose house is due for demolition

1977 08 19

Theoretically worth over £150,000 a year in rent, the 47,000 square foot office accommodation above the Lion Yard has stood empty since the precinct opened nearly two years ago. Agents trying to let the offices blame the economic malaise for their lack of success. The high price of central car parking is also a barrier. The city council made a former builders' site available to encourage offers and now one taker has at last been found. Vinters, the Cambridge solicitors have taken space. But Bidwells say matters will only improve when companies begin to expand and the perpetually optimistic estate agents say it is beginning to happen. 77 08 19

1977 09 12

Kite plans changed, p5

1977 10 04

The Cambridge department store Laurie and McConnal in Fitzroy Street is to close in December. Indecision over plans for the Kite area redevelopment is the reason, said Mr Anthony Fraiss. "We have tried everything we know to get something moving in the Kite, and while the council is now at last seeing sense we cannot afford to wait the two years before anything actually happens. As a small family company are paying penal rates." The business was established nearly 100 years ago. 77 10 04

1977 10 05

The sudden news of Laurie's closure has come as a shock to the City Council team involved in drawing up the Kite plans. Council leader, John Powley, said he was "very sorry indeed" and could well understand their frustration at the indecision. "Gradual renewal of the area, as some people want, just will not happen and will lead to a speedy decline of the whole area. A satisfactory scheme must be produced as speedily as possible. Constant delays are not good for the area, for the people of the city, or for Cambridge as a whole". 77 10 05

1977 10 05

The news that Laurie and McConnal's department store is closing will have come as a surprise to most people. But to anyone who regularly used the store it was only a question of time before they succumbed to the inevitable. Even at the height of the shopping day you could be the only potential customer in any one department. It had 50,000 sq ft of selling space, spread over five floors to service, heat, decorate and keep full of merchandise and the passing trade had dropped off dramatically as so many houses have been knocked down and food shops have disappeared from the Kite area. 77 10 05

1977 10 08

More shops in the Kite area will be forced to close unless something is done quickly to rejuvenate the area. A number of stores have been teetering on the brink for some time and could go out of business. This has been caused by all the little ginger groups, all pushing for their own things. They hack and maul among themselves and all they succeed in doing is to cause the sort of intolerable position that Lauries found itself in. It is all very well saying the Kite should stay exactly as it is. But it cannot. It has changed markedly over the years and is still changing. It either has to be redeveloped in some fashion, or it dies. 77 10 08

1977 10 11 c

The latest and controversial proposals for rebuilding the Kite area of Cambridge took another step along the long road to becoming reality when the city council accepted them in principle as a basis for discussion with a number of companies interested in financing the project. It took almost two hours of debate – which at times became heated and bitter – to reach the decision. Supporters warned against further delays; Coun Gough Goodman said "Filibustering in the council chamber has resulted in the loss of jobs for many people and the loss of a splendid business, Laurie & McConnal"

1977 11 14

There are almost 400 properties standing vacant in Cambridge according to the Empty Property Action Group. More than 200 are houses of which the great majority are privately owned. There are 1,026 people on the council's "live" waiting list and another 1,400 seeking council accommodation at

some future date. Numerous organisations are seeking accommodation for special groups like the College of Arts and Technology, Women's Aid, Fulbourn Hospital and Cyrenians Night Shelter. The Kite and Castle Street areas share the highest concentration of empty property. The city council are worried that the list could serve as a kind of housing register for squatters.

1977 11 25

Kite plans, p1

1978

*Enter Grosvenor Estates Commercial Developers, backs scheme & enters partnership with City council. Oversight in procedures mean council unable to compulsorily purchase land needed until 1983; council used wrong procedures in seeking to evict three people - one city councillor - from 72 Fitzroy St 81 06 01*

1978 01 10

Cambridge City Council has told a group of Peterborough councillors to stop interfering in their affairs. The slanging match was prompted by the Cambridge Kite development project. The Peterborough councillors want to avoid a repeat of what has happened in part of their city when redevelopers moved in and put up "a lot of horrible concrete buildings all over the place". But the advice has upset members of the panel who are overseeing the Kite project. One said: "I would tell Peterborough to mind its own business; they should put their own house in order and I would thank them for not trying to tell us what to do"

1978 02 17

The battle for the Free Press has been won and this celebrated Kite survivor was officially reopened in all its renovated glory. It is a small street corner public house, originally on the end of a terrace of cottages. In 1964 it was purchased by Cambridge City Council as part of a clearance area and the cottages were demolished. But the pub was leased back to Greene King so it could continue to trade until required for demolition. The challenge has been to preserve and enhance the original character, retaining all the interesting features while enlarging the premises. It was reopened by Miss Brenda Nichols whose family ran the pub for 48 years.

1978 03 07

Residents are occupying a deserted house in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge, after learning that the city council is about to demolish three other "unsafe" houses in the Kite area. Officers offered to re-assess the situation if the protesters paid them £340 – the cost of making the buildings safe. The Kite group stayed up collecting the money, only to be told the council would not accept it after all. The action is in spite of an assurance that demolition would only take place once the redevelopment scheme had been approved. The protesters are deeply disturbed that private citizens have to pay for council work in order to avoid the premature demolition of sound properties in the Kite. 78 03 07

1978 03 11

City unable to buy by compulsory purchase, 'kills scheme' [7.5]

1978 03 13

The latest scheme for the Kite redevelopment in Cambridge threatens to collapse amid renewed bitterness and bumbledom. The 20-year-old history of "something being about to be done" has resulted in large-scale blight and buildings mouldering beyond repair. Just as predictable as crumbling masonry has been the increasing fed-upness of the people living in the area. They fought long and hard but until last week most of them realised their cause was lost and that the latest scheme would go ahead. Now at the last moment it probably won't because of a blunder by council officials.

1978 03 20

The Kite, once the busiest out-of-centre shopping precinct in Cambridge is no longer flying high. Years of indecision by the City Council about the site and shape of successive rebuilding schemes have left their mark. The uncertainty had already led to the closure of Laurie and McConnal's and a number of smaller shops, branches of national chain stores have also moved away. The closures have meant fewer shoppers being attracted to the area and a general run down of business for many of the traders.

1978 04 04

Squatters protest over eviction Kite [7.8]

1978 06 22

"Parking is so easy on the Kite" advertising feature [7.6]

1978 07 03

The Kite area of Cambridge plans to go the way of Rhodesia by declaring UDI – Unilateral Declaration of Independence - in a semi-serious but symbolic stand against the city council. On Independence Day the kite-shaped bounds of the area will be beaten and the rebel "government" will swing into operation. Arthur Sutton, the 76-year-old bugle-blowing campaigner will be elected Lord Mayor, the rubble-surrounded Little Kettle shop will be declared the town hall, the borders of the area will be marked and passports issued.

1978 07 17

A sophisticated version of rotten egg-throwing provided one of the highlights at Saturday's Tudor Fayre for those with certain views on the proposed Kite development plans. Artist Mr Peter Fluck of Maids Causeway was commissioned by the Kite Co-ordinating Council to draw an outsized head of Coun John Powley, the man spearheading plans to build a large shopping complex. The picture was then electrically wired up and served as a dartboard. Anyone hitting the 'brain cell' rang a bell. During the afternoon more than one Labour councillors was seen surreptitiously to aim a dart at the target

1978 07 21

Kite UDI, p6

1978 07 24

The Kite, Cambridge's own infant breakaway state, gave a further demonstration of the 'freedom' when a colourful procession beat the bounds of the two-day-old 'city'. Led by the self-proclaimed 'Lord Mayor', Arthur Sutton, resplendent in red robes and riding in a carriage, some 80 citizens of the Kite, accompanied by a jazz combo, wound their way to Midsummer Common where a 'Freedom Kite' was symbolically flown. The demonstrators were ignored by their main opponents, the controlling Conservative group, who are proposing to re-develop the run-down area, demolishing parts in the process.

1978 09 01

The Government has stopped Cambridge City Council's plan to rebuild the Kite area. They have refused to allow them to borrow the £2.3 million needed to buy the land for shopping development which means the 20-year saga of decay will continue indefinitely. The council's Conservative leader claimed it was a political decision, probably part of a General Election run-up. M.P. Robert Rhodes James said the blight in the Fitzroy Street area would be perpetuated and the general economic and physical decline of the area would continue remorselessly. But organisations which have been fighting the plans are delighted. 78 09 01 [7.7]

1978 11 17

Twenty-six men live in the county council-run White Ribbon Hostel in East Road, Cambridge with one bath between them. It is hardly worth bathing, the place is so damp and filthy. The rooms at the back are so rotten they are used just for storage. If you have a bedroom to yourself a week in the hostel will cost you £14.78, just £10 less than a room in the relative luxury of the YMCA. The problem is a practical one: the Hostel is scheduled to be demolished should the Kite redevelopment plans go ahead. The council is thus loath to spend much money on the creaking 19th-century structure. 78 11 17

1978 12 13

Cambridge City Council issued a report on the Kite redevelopment proposals detailing its negotiations with Grosvenor Estates, the prospective developers. Grosvenor would finance the land acquisition in the Kite, which the council would endeavour to complete by the end of 1979, and then carry out the redevelopment scheme over the following three years. If it is not possible to acquire sufficient land the council would buy back from Grosvenor Estates whatever land had been bought, and this would be available for any future plans for the area. The City Council will have the right to approve all plans relating to the scheme's appearance

1978 12 15

Mystery Kite purchase, p1

1978 12 18

Kite plans, p6

1979

*Ombudsman report critical of oversight; Shelter report says demolition carried out with minimal concerns about effects on adjoining privately-owned property [9]*

1979 02 09

Kite: derelict house bought by council topping private £13,000 offer [7.9]

1979 03 07

A new double-decker bus station in the centre of Cambridge is being proposed by County traffic experts. Buses would wait only long enough to set down and take up passengers and long-distance buses would run from elsewhere in the city. This one of several options to sort out the chaos of Drummer Street. Others include expanding on to Christ's Pieces, re-siting it to the Kite area or adjacent to the railway station. For years the bus station has been the subject of intensive criticism because of its lack of facilities and poor conditions. Now councillors have made it a priority.

1979 05 08

Kite scheme, p1

1979 06 02

The £10 million Kite area shopping and parking scheme scheduled for opening in 1982 may be scrapped if opposition against it throughout Cambridge is strong enough. An official of Grosvenor Estates, the development company, said "If the people of Cambridge do not want our product we shall not give it to them". But the present indications are that the public does want the Burleigh Street – Fitzroy Street area to be redeveloped as quickly as possible, despite the protests being voiced by pressure groups. The Kite Co-ordinating Council say the plans are 'hopelessly inappropriate' and it is a very cheap scheme: Cambridge deserves something much better than this.

1979 06 12

A Venture centre has opened at the home of the Eden Centre of Dance in City Road, Cambridge. It houses a photographer and a potter and anyone is free to do anything in the other rooms. Now there are plans for a café in the basement to allow people from local streets to drop in and find out what is

going on. It is an attractive three-storey building built in the 18890s as the Cambridge Friendly Society Institute and Working Men's Club which hired out its rooms to a number of smaller societies. But as they grew so they acquired their own headquarters elsewhere. The Institute could not be wound up until the building was sold and that couldn't take place until the planning blight on the Kite was lifted. While it stood empty squatters got in and caused damage.

1979 09 14

Traffic jams would stretch across large parts of Cambridge every weekend if the £10 million Kite shopping development went ahead, a transport report commissioned by the Kite Co-ordinating Council claims. The new traffic may eventually block the Mill Road roundabout for several hours of the day. The number of car parking spaces would need to be doubled to meet demand and the cost would have to come from the ratepayers. Traffic is likely to increase anyway in the next ten years and the anticipated reduction through the opening of the Northern By-pass has not happened, they claim

1979 10 31

Kite, p19

## **1980**

1980

*Cambridge Empty Property Action Group claims lost £350,000 potential income from derelict property [9]*

1980 02 08

Nearly 50 squatters crammed into a tiny room in a derelict house at Fitzroy Street, Cambridge, to stop council workmen from demolishing the building. City councillors were on the scene of the biggest confrontation between squatters and squads of police who failed to persuade them to move. Both sides are preparing for a long-drawn out confrontation. The workmen intended to demolish a whole row of property between Christchurch Street and Napier Street to make way for the first phase of the controversial Kite shopping and parking scheme. Councillors opposing the demolition are trying to see what action can be taken to halt the work. 80 02 08

1980 02 26

Squatters have become a way of life in parts of Cambridge. A bloke called Bleep started it all in 1975 when he somehow entered 13 James Street and called it home. Squatting in the Kite had begun. Numbers swelled, including students, doctors, nurses, research students and the unemployed. They came simply because they were homeless and the Kite had lots of empty houses which could stay empty for years until the time came for demolition. A lot of residents are sympathetic and appreciate having people squatting rather than an empty property next door to them. Some who have left the area have handed over their keys or deliberately left doors open 80 02 26a

1980 03 14

Waffles' waffles have been selling like hot cakes in Cambridge for seven years. Now the small Kite café has been mentioned in the Egon Ronay guide 'Just A Bite'. "Queues of hungry students form outside the door every evening at this most welcoming of little cafes", it writes. But Waffles' days at its present address are numbered because the little shop on the corner of Gold Street and Fitzroy Street is marked for demolition as part of the Kite redevelopment programme. Set in a devastated urban wasteland of rubble and decaying brick the café with its steamy windows, Edwardian interior and babbling conversation provides a friendly island of humanity. 80 03 14d

1980 05 20

The demolition of houses and shops in the Kite area of Cambridge and the eviction of squatters have been stopped by the city council's new Labour administration. Lawyers are examining the future of the controversial £15 million shopping and parking scheme. The Kite Co-ordinating Group which has been leading opposition to the scheme will publish an alternative development plan aimed at retaining

the character of the area. Labour wants more housing and less shopping and parking in the area 80 05 20

1980 05 24

The controversial Kite redevelopment scheme has hit yet another stumbling block and work is unlikely to start at all this year. Cambridge's new Labour administration, which objects to the £15 million shopping and parking scheme now claims there could be very serious difficulties in the way of the development. But the developers, Grosvenor Estates, say it intends to press ahead with the project agreed by the previous Conservative council. 80 05 24b

1980 07 08

Cambridge City Council may refuse to make extra spending cuts because it wants to prevent staff sackings and reductions in public services. They may save money set aside for work on the Cattle Market site – which will not be ready this year anyway – and on modernising the Market Square lavatories. But they want to continue drawing up plans for the Kite area if the present scheme fails. 80 07 08c

1980 08 01

Kite plans, p11

1980 11 11

The much-disputed future of the Kite area of Cambridge may be thrown back into the melting pot yet again. The city council's Labour administration is becoming increasingly convinced that the present development plan, which it has vigorously opposed from the outset, will not now go ahead because of the national economic situation. So they are to start looking at alternative developments. Their partners, Grosvenor Estates, have until the end of the year to find a taker for the major store and say that Debenhams is interested. 80 11 11b

1980 12 18

Kite plan, p1

1980 12 23

Debenhams pull out of major store but six-month reprieve for plan - give Grosvenor time to find taker for main store, agreement expires end of month but no taker; Grosvenor must pay council a ground rent of £65,000 pa if scheme goes ahead; was known that Co-op would shut its doors in Burleigh street if another major store did not come into development [7.10, 9,10]

1981

*Grosvenor announce that Debenhams will take superstore, skirmishes continue 81 06 01*

1981 02 28

Kite: fourth Kite Community Action show - Clive James, Michael Palin & Terry Jones [7.11]

1981 03 27

Traders give up battle to stay in Kite - Waffles etc [7.12]

1981 05 23

Twenty years of uncertainty over the future of the Kite area have ended. Debenham, the major national chain store, is to move into a superstore planned for the £15 million shopping development. Labour councillors who have led opposition against the scheme have conceded defeat saying there is nothing they can now do to halt it. The Conservatives who initiated the scheme and have never flagged in their confidence that it would eventually get under way are delighted 81 05 23

1981 05 27

A Cambridge consortium which owns a shop in the centre of the planned £15 million Kite rebuilding scheme is steadfastly refusing to sell to make way for the giant new redevelopment. No.56 Fitzroy Street was bought in a bid to stop the scheme and their leader, a Cambridge don, says: "Under no circumstances are we going to budge – not even if they offered us £5 million. They can build all around us if they like – I am looking forward to our little shop becoming part of the shopping precinct with a large glass dome over the roof" 81 05 27

1981 06 01

"Kite sage: the first 30 years" review: Bitter personal arguments, the sound of falling masonry and a series of costly court actions have punctuated the 30-year-Kite saga. In 1950, the Holford Report suggested that the city's historic centre could not meet the shopping needs of future generations. "We regard Fitzroy Street as a valuable relief for pressure on the older centre", it said. Now with the news that Debenhams is to move into the new development and that work is due to start this summer, the saga may be nearing its end. 81 06 01

1981 06 17

Kite: car parks close [7.14]

1981 07 11

Another old Cambridge landmark – the former Little Kettle premises in Fitzroy Street – disappeared when it was demolished as part of the Kite re-development programme. Over the years the premises had various uses, but they are best remembered as the general hardware shop which had a small kettle hanging outside. 81 07 11

1981 07 28

The former Laurie and McConnal store and a number of small adjoining shops in Fitzroy Street have been sold to Grosvenor Estates, who are redeveloping the Kite. It was one of the city's largest and longest-established department stores but has been empty since the firm closed down at the end of 1977. Now it will be refurbished and brought back into retail use. 81 07 28

1981 08 03

The saga of property dealing and controversy in the Kite redevelopment area of Cambridge has come to an end. The last remaining privately-owned shop at 56 Fitzroy Street has been sold to the city council and its partner, Grosvenor Estates for a price of around £30,000. This has given the owners, a consortium of university dons, a £5,000 profit which will be distributed to two charities. As part of the deal a number of small traders will be allowed to stay in their shops for up to three months. 81 08 03c

1981 08 04

Sir – as squatters in the old 'Strudels' building in Fitzroy Street we had come to an amicable arrangement with the council to move out to make way for the Kite redevelopment. We spent the night packing but were aroused by the front door being broken down at 8 am, other demolition men began smashing the plate-glass windows of the shop adjacent scattering glass over the road where our removal vehicles needed to park. We were lucky no serious damage was done to our possessions – H. Williams & others. 81 08 04

1981 09 08

Amid much music and good cheer, the Ancient Druids closed – the last of nine pubs in Fitzroy Street. Soon the 200-year-old rafters will collapse under the developer's sledge-hammers to make way for the multi-million pound Kite shopping development. But last night they rang to the rollicking rhythm of Irish ceilidh music from Ted Stacey's melodeon, accompanied by guitars, penny whistles, banjo and drums. The wake ended when it ran out of beer. The brewers, Charles Wells, are building another when the development is completed. 81 09 08

1981 09 15



A park-and-ride bus service linking shops in the Burleigh Street area with the car park in Cherryhinton Road has started disastrously. Nobody used the service for several hours. It is being funded with £400 from city lottery profits with Kite traders adding another £100. But councillors say the money should have been earmarked for charity. 81 09 15a

1981 09 26

An era came to an end when the self-styled 'Lord Mayor of the Kite', Mr Arthur Sutton, moved out of his house in Christchurch Street. It occupies an important position in the £15 million development scheme but he refused to budge until the developers came up with somewhere nearby for him to live. Now they are to build him a detached three-bedroomed house a few doors away 81 09 26

1981 10 09

Wards have been in Cambridge for more than 70 years, originally making and selling cycles. By the 1930s they were involved in electronics, making their own wireless receiver, the Wards Three Valve. In the 1950s they expanded into communications, selling televisions and other electronic equipment, moving from East Road to a new shop in Burleigh Street in 1965 with another in Bradwell's Court. At its peak in the 1970s they won contracts with Iraq and the Defence Ministry. Now it will close for the last time. 81 10 09d

1981 11 13

Skirting the roadworks and dodging the demolition rubble, the visitor finds the Kite area of Cambridge hardly the easiest or most picturesque place to shop. Almost one side of Fitzroy Street is empty. The top end, which once included a Post Office, sweet shop, denture repairer and café called the Toby Jug, has been flattened. The Co-op department store in Burleigh Street have axed the traditional ceremonial arrival of Father Christmas as it would aggravate traffic problems. Add the lack of parking space and it is not surprising that traders fear for their Christmas profits. 81 11 13a

1982

*Building begins to take shape 81 06 01*

1982 07 23

Kite tunnel, p12

1983 02 12

C & A, one of the biggest family outfitters, will be opening a large shop in Cambridge's new Grafton Centre. Also coming are Habitat, the household group, and Key Markets, one of the country's largest food supermarket chains who will be employing 200 staff. They will complement Debenhams who are taking a major slice of space in the centre along with Heffers, Currys, Savory and Moore and Stead and Simpson. 83 02 12

1983 03 17

Cambridge Working Men's' Club's 100-year old existence is in doubt because the city and county councils cannot agree on its resiting. Grosvenor Developments who built the Grafton Centre, offered to pay £500,000 for it to be resited on ground a few yards away owned by the city council. But they will not sell because if it moves it will leave the way clear for the county council to go ahead with the widening of East Road which the Labour city council opposes. Now Grosvenor may withdraw its offer and leave ratepayers to foot the entire bill. 83 03 17 p20

1983 06 29

Charles Wells, the Bedford brewers, are planning to set up a micro-brewery as part of the Ancient Druids public house which is due to open in Napier Street on the edge of the Grafton Centre in 1984. The brewery will be quite small and will brew beer for consumption in the house. It will mean the return of brewing to Cambridge which once had numerous breweries including five or six on Newmarket Road. 83 06 29 p3

1983 07 01

A visit to Waffles on Castle Hill is like stepping back in time to the heyday of the unique Kite café which was such a popular venue until the bulldozers moved in. The highly successful venture was built up by Mrs Virginia Le Charite over nine years until its closure in 1981. The familiar tables and chairs, the ornate cash register, the dresser and clock are all there and it is still producing those scrumptious and filling savoury and sweet batter rolls with a variety of toppings at prices from 90p. 83 07 01 p24

1983 07 21

The fate of the old Laurie and McConnal store - which has been lying empty since it closed five years ago – has been decided at last. Habitat, a national chain of home furnishing shops, is to move in to the store on the fringe of the new Grafton Centre. Debenhams has taken the main store on the site, the supermarket booked by Keymarkets will probably open as a branch of Gateway and the biggest ‘variety’ store is being taken by C&A. But letting arrangements have still to be concluded on 30 of the 45 medium-sized shops 83 07 21 p1 [11]

1983 08 04

Seventeen flats and maisonettes being built as part of the Grafton Centre are now on the market. The flats in Fitzroy Street have a bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom & private rooftop terraced areas and sell for £29,500. The maisonettes are on two floors and have two bedrooms, they sell for £42,000. The scheme also includes 22 one-bedroomed flats in Christchurch Street which will be available on a share-ownership basis through the King Street Housing Society. Most have been allocated already. 83 08 04 p12

1983 10 11

The new Grafton Centre, the biggest shake-up in Cambridge retailing for a century, is only medium sized in terms of city centre redevelopments but is enough to upset the balance of trade in Cambridge. “No one would pretend that it is linked to the existing shopping centre to the extent that people can use both on the same day”, said the man in charge of the project for Grosvenor Estates. The next six months trading will be keenly watched by shops in the historic centre. The attractiveness of the Grafton Centre will depend on easy access and whether it offers value for money and diversity. They have accepted lower rents in order to get shopkeepers which cannot afford big overheads. 83 10 11 p11

1983 10 19

The new Grafton Centre has a variety of stores, a large supermarket and 50 shop units in addition to the new Debenhams. Construction of the 11-acre centre is a milestone in the annals of Cambridge with the bulk of the building work being completed in just 2½ years. This in stark contrast to the time spent thinking about it, but hopefully the Byzantine manoeuvres accompanying its birth may in the end prove well justified. 83 10 19 p4

1983 10 19

Businessmen and shopkeepers in the Fitzroy-Burleigh Street area are hoping that trade which has been depressed in recent years by the area’s lack of glitter and by the large-scale building works, will now come bounding back. Traders such as the Cambridge Co-op, now in the throes of a re-development plan which will see the conversion of its second floor to a suite of offices for letting, should do well. 83 10 19 p14

1983 10 20

A quarter of a century of planning wrangles ended today when the £27 million Grafton shopping centre development opened. Part is still unfinished but there was a general sense of relief that the Kite at last had its new prestigious shopping development. It looks slightly bare as many of the shop units were still unfilled however shoppers seemed happy as they walked through the new arcade of the main concourse. 83 10 20 p1 [20.1]

1983 10 20

Shopkeepers in Burleigh Street feel they will be crippled by the opening of the Grafton Centre. Trade has been disastrous since the road was dug up five weeks ago and left with piles of sand, rubble and deep, wide holes. Now some are refusing to pay their rates bills. They feel developers want to make the area look like a tip so customers would stay in the Grafton Centre. But the City Surveyor says the road is going to be pedestrianised and will be completed on time. 83 10 20 p16

1983 11 09

The new Presto supermarket in the Grafton Centre caters for a wide range of customers with its instore bakery, fresh meat, wet fish and delicatessen counters offering an up-market choice alongside a wide range of Red Dot bargain lines and specially-packaged basics. What its competitors want to know is what kind of shoppers it will attract, and how many. It will offer a cheque-cashing service where customers can withdraw £50 at a time. 83 11 09 p5

1984 01 04

Grosvenor Estates, landlords of the Grafton Centre are turning away potential tenants for the remaining shops. At present seven of the major units are unlet plus two smaller ones, with another six in the smaller Eden Hall and four in Fitzroy Street. Very few new traders have appeared since the summer and a number are still waiting to open, including Gerrards the greengrocers, Studio (Harry Fenton) menswear, Zales jewellers and Our Price records. But Grosvenor say they are doing better than they anticipated. 84 01 04

1984 01 13

Lean post-Christmas trading [20.3]

1984 04 13

People who work in the new shops at the Grafton centre are to be offered cheap parking in a bid to make the under-used car parks profitable. They will be allowed all-day Monday to Friday parking for £35 for three months. As well as filling the near-empty car parks it will stop staff from parking their cars in nearby side streets. 84 04 13

1984 05 14

Work on rebuilding the Cambridge Co-op store in Burleigh Street has reached the half-way mark. It will transform the historic building, bringing in new kinds of goods, a hairdressing salon and a coffee shop. For the first time it will have departments for self-assembly furniture and lighting as well as counters for the Burleigh Street post office and the Co-op Bank. A three-storey atrium at the Fitzroy Street end of the building will provide an airy display centre for shoes and furniture. 84 05 14 p5

1984 05 16

The Queen gave her royal seal of approval to Cambridge's multi-million pound Grafton Centre when she unveiled a plaque to mark its official opening. Cheering crowds queued for hours to glimpse her. A fanfare performed by the 20-piece orchestra from the Manor School greeted the royal party. After the opening the queen spoke to many of the children and shop staff. Earlier hundreds were outside the station for the arrival of her train, pulled by a locomotive named after Mr Jim Nightall, the brave footplateman who saved Soham from disaster by unhitching a blazing bomb-laden train during the war. 84 05 16 p12

1984 11 14

The redevelopment of the huge Co-op site in Burleigh Street has been beset with problems ever since the first report on Cambridge shopping in the fifties. Now it has transformed its flagship store inside and out, demonstrating its faith in the twin shopping centre concept. It says much for the Co-op's business acumen that it has kept pace with the latest trends, adapting to the needs of the times and retaining a hard core of loyal support from its members. 84 11 14 suppl6

1984 12 08

The very new Ancient Druids pub has opened its doors for the first time – but not without a slight delay. The pub brews their own ale on the premises but when Cambridge's mayor pulled the pump for the first pint all he got was an eggful of the new Charles Wells brew, Kite Bitter, and a lot of home-brewed air. However, after a rapid change of pump, a glass was drawn to be sampled by Ale Conner Alfie Howard from Lambeth, who revives the centuries-old tradition of testing the beer before a pub can start serving. Dressed in his 17th-century costume he passed it as fit and hoisted aloft an ale garland signifying the new brew was ready for drinking. The old Ancient Druids, remembered as an old-fashioned boozier with its own particular charm, was one of nine to go under the developers' bulldozer. 84 12 08

1985 01 07

Cutlack, the Ely-based hardware merchants, are to close their shop in Burleigh Street, Cambridge. It follows a period of poor trading for shops in the street. They planned the business around the creation of the Grafton Centre but pedestrianisation has not helped in any way and their Newmarket shop does two-and-a-half times more business than the Cambridge one. The site will now be redeveloped with extra shop frontage and improved access to the three floors of office space on the site 85 01 07a

1985 08 30

Now that the dust has settled after the upheaval of building the Grafton Centre, Burleigh Street and Fitzroy Street have emerged as pleasant shopping promenades. Very few shops remain unlet with Andy's Records and Lancashire Mills about to open. Fitzroy Street will become more interesting in October when Habitat finally open at the old Laurie & McConnell shop while Burleigh Street will get a similar boost when the House of Holland opens in the old Arcade centre. 85 08 30

1985 10 23

Eight years after Laurie's doors closed forever, the tiers of galleries round the central well which gave the old store such a distinctive character will be alive with shoppers once again. On the official opening a band will once again occupy the bandstand on top of the building in Fitzroy Street. Traders are hoping that the arrival of Habitat will bring an influx of new shoppers to boost the whole area. Sofas are their best-selling furniture line in a range which includes lighting, self-assembly kitchens and fabrics. 85 10 23

1985 12 02

A plan devised by Grosvenor Estates could add a third to the size of the Grafton Centre. The extension would be built around a central mall at right angles to the present one using the site of the present bus interchange and the land now occupied by the yard of Coulsons, the building contractors. It would have a two-storey roof park for 350 cars with a number reserved for shop staff. Coupled with the opening of Habitat in Fitzroy Street it would strengthen the appeal of the area against that of Cambridge's traditional city centre. 85 12 02a

1986 05 20

Grafton Centre for extension unveiled (agreed 1986) [20.4]

1986 09 08

The Ancient Druids closed down amid much music and good cheer at a wake featuring Irish ceilidh music from Tom Stacey's melodeon. Soon the 200-year-old rafters will collapse under the developers' sledge-hammers to make way for the Kite shopping development. It is the last of the nine pubs in Fitzroy Street – the others were the Cherry Tree, Danish Flag, Fitzroy Arms, Duke of Wellington, Harp, Queen's Arms, Golden Cross and Old English Gentleman. The brewers, Charles Wells, are building a new pub when the development is complete. 86 09 08

1986 09 26

Arthur Sutton, the self-styled 'Lord Mayor of the Kite' has finally moved from Christchurch Street where he has lived for 65 years. The property – a former brewery - occupies an important position in the £15 million development scheme for the area. But he had refused to leave until developers

promised to build him a new home a few doors away. He has promised to have a 'mayoral' house-warming party when he moves in. 86 09 26

1987 09 14

Developers are eying-up property in Newmarket Road. They have approached Greene King about acquiring the Seven Stars, Corner House, Five Bells, Rose and Crown and Bird in Hand public houses. Already Eastern Gas has sold off more than three acres of the former gas works and the disused Chapman and Arber scrap yard has also attracted interest. Gray's the tobacconist has sold up, Jack Reynold's sweet shop closes next month and Grosvenor will soon start work on the old Carioca nightclub site which will house offices and small businesses. 87 09 14b

1987 09 29

A new-look Co-op has come to Cambridge with the refurbishment of the old premises in Burleigh Street producing the latest of the Society's Homemaker stores. Although it now occupies only the ground floor it has a more modern look and concentrates on electrical goods bringing it more in tune with the Grafton Centre. None of the staff have been made redundant though some have moved to the Beehive site. 87 09 29a

1987 11 03

Your new Debenhams is here at the Grafton Centre! Step into a new shopping experience and discover the delights of Debenhams. Floor upon floor of fashion and home furnishing to please both eye and pocket. And to celebrate our opening we've some really special offers including a range of fondues, Meyer Tensi Cookware, Oneida 44-piece stainless steel canteen (£149), Royal Doulton 'Delphi bone china 18-piece tea set (£75). Late night shopping Wednesdays till 8pm. (Advertisement) 87 11 03b

1988 05 03

The Presto supermarket in the Grafton Centre, which has been there since the centre opened in 1983, is no longer economic and will close. The owners, Argyll Foods, say a major food store did not fit well into a development which had become much more fashion oriented and was becoming unprofitable to operate. Next day came news of a large extension to Debenhams, a major new store, 14 new shops and a multi-screen cinema complex. 88 05 03a & 4

1988 05 12

From the moment the Grafton Centre opened in October 1983, everybody connected with it knew that it was too small at 300,000 sq feet. It was locked in by its location with the only real scope for expansion on the East Road side. This needed a deal with Coulsons, the long-established Cambridge builder. Retailers had reservations about the initial plans for a major new store built around Presto supermarket. It had been intended to provide the kind of balanced development considered important in the 1970s, but had never proved successful. 88 05 12 & a 88 05 12.5.88

1988 05 19

Petition for grocery shop replace Presto 88 05 19.5.88

1988 11 03

Planning granted for £30M expansion Grafton Centre, including cinema 88 11 03.11.88

1989 01 19

The second phase of the Grafton Centre shopping complex, which is almost half as big again, has been delayed by nine months. It will include new shopping malls, a food area and the conversion of the old Presto store into 15 business units. It means the seven screen cinema and 257 extra parking spaces will also be set back. The news has been greeted with dismay by Councillors. Developers Grosvenor has blamed the delay on design changes, although finance has not yet been organised. 89 01 19

1989 03 07

Jeweller leaves Grafton centre - "too downmarket"; rent rises from £5,000 to £12,500   CEN 7.3.89

1989 07 18

Planners approve phase two expansion Grafton centre   CEN 18.7.89

1989 09 22

Kite area controversy – review of plans – 89 09 22b

1989 10 21

Grafton Centre traders are protesting against parking charges which can cost shoppers five times as much as those in rival towns and is keeping customers away. 89 10 21

1989 11 21

Co-op chiefs have been forced to sell off the freehold of their Burleigh Street store to fend off a cash crisis. The Victorian building has been sold to a London Investment Company and they will lease back the premises. The Co-op began trading in Burleigh Street in 1908 but has been hit by soaring interest rates on loans taken out to cover major projects such as the massive Beehive Centre. It has already put branches up for sale in Mill Road, Milton Road, Waterbeach, Duxford & Cherry Hinton. 89 11 21

1990 04 16

Giant multi-screen cinema may be built in heart of Cambridge as plans for cinema as part of the Grafton Centre – 90 04 16a

1990 07 07

Grafton Centre second phase, including cinema, is in doubt as major investor Sun Life Insurance puts its 84 per cent holding on market as it does not believe the extension is viable – 90 07 07